

CHAPTER 2 – PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

2.1 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

2.1.1 Need for the Proposed Project

As noted in Chapter 1, the project study area is developing rapidly. This development, as planned by the City of Phoenix and Arizona State Land Department (ASLD), requires a transportation network consistent with the land use and transportation components of the City's General Plan. To accommodate growth as planned, additional interchanges with I-17 would be needed. At this time, there are no interchanges with I-17 between Carefree Highway and Happy Valley Road, a distance of approximately 6 miles. The proposed project would provide three service interchanges on I-17, in addition to the system interchange between SR 303L and I-17 and one service interchange on SR 303L at 43rd Avenue. These interchanges would provide freeway access for residents and businesses in the developing area, support planned arterial development by the City of Phoenix, and maintain the one-mile interchange spacing that has worked well throughout the urban area.

The proposed SR 303L ultimately would extend from I-10 in Goodyear to I-17 in northwest Phoenix. Without the system interchange proposed by this project, the SR 303L would not connect to the I-17 and thus would not complete the regional facility as proposed by MAG.

2.1.2 Purpose of the Proposed Project

The purpose of the proposed project is to complete the regional freeway link between the SR 303L and I-17. The proposed project would produce a continuous highway facility to alleviate the severe traffic congestion predicted by traffic analysis (URS 2005a). The three proposed service interchanges on SR 303L and I-17 and a fourth service interchange on SR 303L and 43rd Avenue would link the arterial road system planned by the City of Phoenix and the regional freeway system.

2.2 CONFORMANCE WITH REGULATIONS, LAND USE PLANS, AND OTHER PLANS

The proposed project study area encompasses lands under the management of the ASLD and is located entirely within the boundaries of the City of Phoenix. Land ownership is illustrated in Figure 2-1.

The General Plan for the City of Phoenix (City of Phoenix 2000) and MAG's Valley Vision 2025 (MAG 2000) were reviewed to determine the conformance of the proposed project with local planning goals and objectives. Applicable land use planning documents for the ASLD also were reviewed to determine project conformance. Throughout the study process, representatives from state and local jurisdictions and agencies have been actively involved with the project through monthly stakeholder meetings. Overall, the proposed project is in conformance with established land use plans.

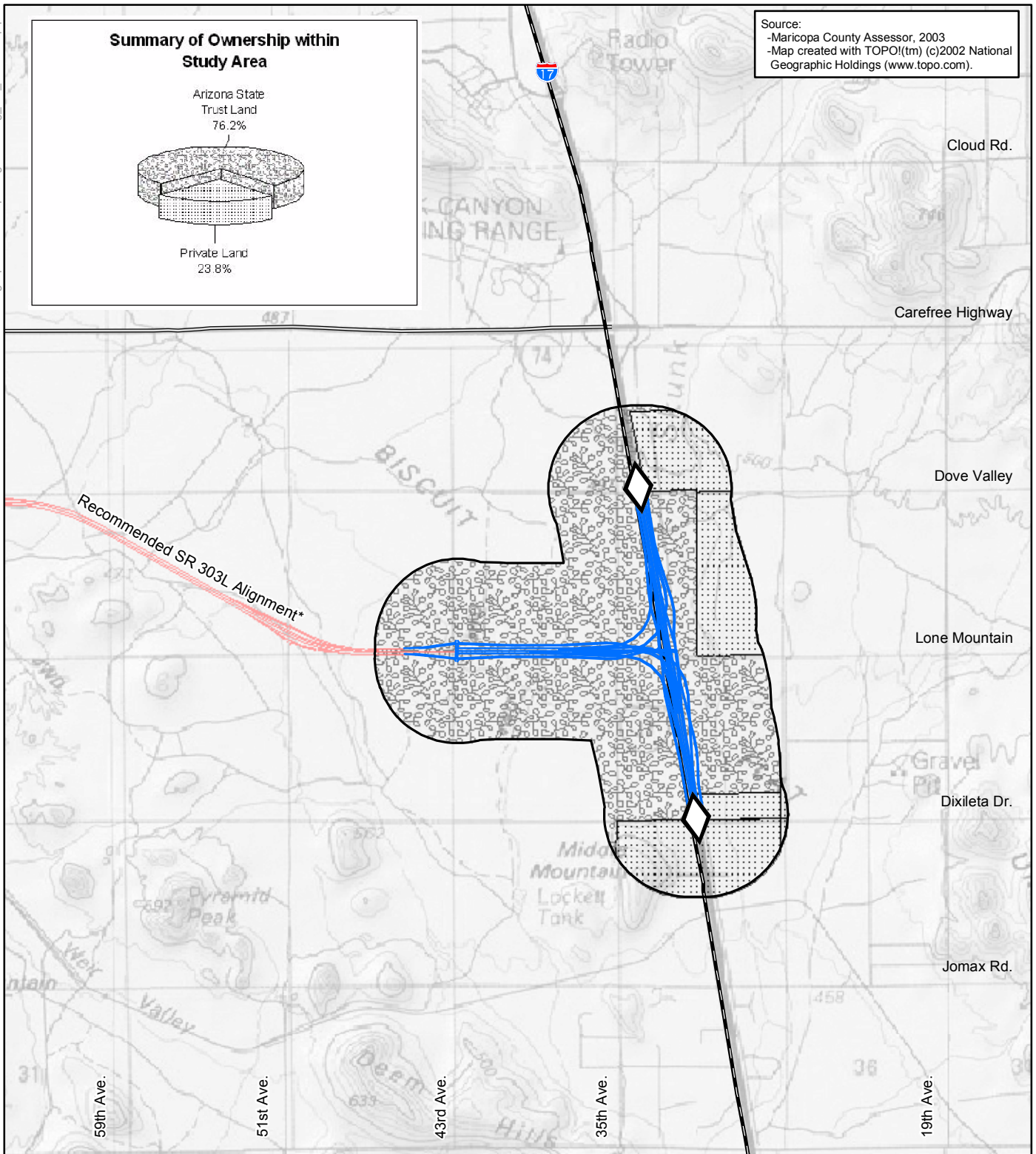
MAG's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) (MAG 2003) includes the proposed location of the system interchange along the Lone Mountain Road section line. The RTP also includes the Dove Valley and Dixileta interchanges. MAG has participated throughout the planning process to provide input and ensure communication with ADOT on the proposed project. Coordination with MAG would continue throughout the design and implementation of the proposed project.

2.3 GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

According to the MAG RTP, the proposed SR 303L/I-17 system interchange would be built in Phase II of the RTP (2010-2015). An interim connection to I-17 may be provided in Phase I of the RTP (2005-2010) via frontage roads and a service interchange on I-17 at Lone Mountain Road. The Dixileta interchange is included in Phase II and the Dove Valley interchange is included in Phase IV (2020-2025) of the RTP.

2.4 ISSUES ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED STUDY

Based on existing sources of data and the best available information, there are no known wilderness areas, designated critical habitats, or wild and scenic rivers within the area of the proposed project, and therefore no impacts to these resources are anticipated. It is proposed that no known sole-source aquifers or wetlands (as defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [Corps]) are present in the project study area. Subject to concurrence by the Corps, there would be no impacts to these resources as a result of the proposed project.



*The recommended alignment is being evaluated in a separate EA.